

I am a flight attendant for a major airline. I am wholeheartedly against allowing passengers to use their cell phones on the aircraft during flight. This can cause major distractions, disregard for the flight attendant's authority and could become a serious safety hazard. Passengers rarely listen to the very important safety information that flight attendants give for each flight. Traveling businessmen are the worst, they think that just because they travel a lot, that they know everything there is to know about air travel. This disregard for the safety information spills over to cell phone use already, and the phones are required to be turned off before the safety information is given to the passengers. At least once a week or more, I have been in the middle of my safety demonstration and have heard someone's cell phone ringing. Now I must stop and find the person who has disregarded my previous instructions regarding cell phone usage and enforce the regulations. This disrupts the flight, and we haven't even left the ground. Imagine being in the air at 40,000 feet and having an emergency, not a terrorist attack, but a real-life medical emergency and having to instruct 150 people to turn off their cell phones so that we can assist the person in need. Passengers will be on the phone with the news media, their family or next door neighbor giving a blow-by-blow account of the emergency and before we land the airplane it will be on the news for the world to see. What about that person's family who knows that their loved one is on that flight? What are they to think when they hear someone telling CNN "Some guy just passed out and the flight attendants are hooking him up to the automatic defibrillator" followed by a description of the passenger. Cell phone usage should be limited to the ground only. There is nothing that cannot wait until we have reached our destination to be handled. There is not much anyone can do about any situation in the air anyway, and do we really want our passengers dictating to the flight attendants and pilots what they do on the aircraft. Can't you just see it? Some self-important businessman has an "emergency" at work and has to get on the ground immediately. What is he going to do, force his way into the cockpit and demand that the pilots return to the originating point of the flight so that he can handle his business? That will happen if the FCC allows cell phone usage during flights.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Bell
Flight Attendant